

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, the applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are not anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and are not rendered obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Accordingly, it is believed that this application is in condition for allowance. **If, however, the Examiner believes that there are any unresolved issues, or believes that some or all of the claims are not in condition for allowance, the applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned to schedule a telephone Examiner Interview before any further actions on the merits.**

The applicant will now address each of the issues raised in the outstanding Office Action.

Objections

Claims 2-4, 14 and 15 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 2, 4, 14 and 15 have been rewritten in independent form. Therefore, these claims are now in allowable form. Since claim 3 depends from claim 2, it is also now in allowable form.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claim 1 stands under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,937,214 ("the Shintani

patent"). Since this claim has been canceled, this ground of rejection is rendered moot.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103


Claims 13 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,709,138 ("the Suda patent") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,402,197 ("the Okano patent"). Since these claims have been canceled, this ground of rejection is rendered moot.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the applicant requests that the Examiner pass this application to issue.

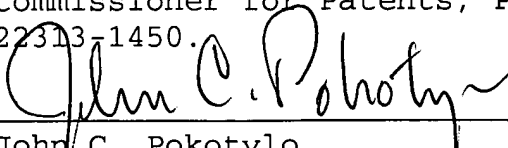
Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING under 37 C.F.R. 1.8(a)

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited on **February 16, 2005** with the United States Postal Service as first class mail, with sufficient postage, in an envelope addressed to Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.


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